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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/805,055	03/14/2001	Norihisa Okada	503.39842X00	2640

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EXAMINER
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SIMONE, CATHERINE A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1772

DATE MAILED: 04/18/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

09/805,055

Applicant(s)

OKADA ET AL.

Examiner

Catherine Simone

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 February 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 4-9 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3 and 10-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120**

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. **Claims 1, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 21 and 22** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lambing et al. (5,160,771).

Regarding **claims 1 and 12**, Lambing et al. discloses a composite panel comprising a first flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #20), a second flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #65), and a flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15) provided between the first flat face sheet and the second flat face sheet, characterized in that a length of the first flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #20) is equal to a length of the flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15); an end portion of the second flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #65) is positioned shorter than an end portion of the flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15); and a whole face of the first flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #20) is adhered to substantially a whole face of the flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15); and the flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15) in a side of the end portion of the second flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #65) is not adhered to the second flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #65), whereby the second flat face sheet is partially adhered to the flat center core member. Regarding **claims 10, 15 and 17**, note each of the first flat face sheet and the second flat face sheet is formed from a fiber reinforced plastic (see col. 2, lines 22-30). Regarding **claim 19**,

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note a thickness of each of the first and second flat face plates is in a range of about 0.5 mm-2.0 mm (see col. 2, lines 13-16).

Regarding **claims 21 and 22**, process limitations are given little or no patentable weight. The method of forming the product is not germane to the issue of patentability of the product itself. Further, when the prior art discloses a product which reasonably appears to be either identical with or only slightly different than a product claim in a product-by-process claim, the burden is on the Applicant to present evidence from which the Examiner could reasonably conclude that the claimed product differs in kind from those of the prior art. *In re Brown*, 459 F.2d 531, 173 USPQ 685 (CCPA 1972); *In re Fessman*, 489 F.2d 742, 180 USPQ 324 (CCPA 1974). This burden is NOT discharged solely because the product was derived from a process not known to the prior art. *In re Fessman*, 489 F.2d 742, 180 USPQ 324 (CCPA 1974).

Furthermore, the determination of patentability for a product-by-process claim is based on the product itself and not on the method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process. *In re Thorpe*, 227 USPQ 946, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985) and MPEP §2113. In this case, the limitation "by one of soldering, welding and by an adhesive coating" (claims 21 and 22) is a method of production and therefore does not determine the patentability of the product itself.

3. **Claim 3** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Welsh (3,890,108).

Welsh discloses a composite panel comprising a first flat face sheet (Fig. 1, #12), a second flat face sheet (Fig. 1, #14), and a flat center core member (Fig. 1, #16) provided between and adhered to the first face sheet (Fig. 1, #12) and the second flat face sheet (Fig. 1, #14),

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characterized in that the first flat face sheet (Figs. 2-5, #12), the second flat face sheet (Figs. 2-5, #14) and the flat center core member (Figs. 2-5, #16) are bent at a portion between their ends; and the first flat face sheet is a separate sheet from the second flat face sheet.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. **Claims 11, 13, and 16** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lambing et al. (5,160,771).

Lambing et al. discloses a composite panel comprising a first flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #20), a second flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #65), and a flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15) provided between the first flat face sheet and the second flat face sheet, characterized in that a length of the first flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #20) is equal to a length of the flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15); an end portion of the second flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #65) is positioned shorter than an end portion of the flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15); and a whole face of the first flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #20) is adhered to substantially a whole face of the flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15); and the flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15) in a side of the end portion of the second flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #65) is not adhered to the second flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #65), whereby the second flat face sheet is partially adhered to the flat center core member. However, Lambing et al. fails to disclose the flat center core member formed from a material selected from the group

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consisting of a honeycomb shaped paper, a honeycomb shaped fiber reinforced plastic and a foam material. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the applicant's invention was made to have the flat center core member in Lambing et al. made of a material selected from the group consisting of a honeycomb shaped paper, a honeycomb shaped fiber reinforced plastic and a foam material, since it had been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416.

6. **Claims 14, 18, and 20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lambing et al. (5,160,771).

Lambing et al. discloses a composite panel comprising a first flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #20), a second flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #65), and a flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15) provided between the first flat face sheet and the second flat face sheet, characterized in that a length of the first flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #20) is equal to a length of the flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15); an end portion of the second flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #65) is positioned shorter than an end portion of the flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15); and a whole face of the first flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #20) is adhered to substantially a whole face of the flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15); and the flat center core member (Fig. 4, #15) in a side of the end portion of the second flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #65) is not adhered to the second flat face sheet (Fig. 4, #65), whereby the second flat face sheet is partially adhered to the flat center core member. However, Lambing fails to disclose the flat center core member having a thickness in the range of about 20 mm to 50 mm. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the applicant's invention was made to modify the thickness of the flat center core member in Lambing et al. to be in the

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range of about 20 mm to 50 mm, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art absence of showing unexpected results. *In re Boesch and Slaney*, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980).

***Response to Arguments***

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1 and 3 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

***Conclusion***

8. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Catherine Simone whose telephone number is (703) 605-4297. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:30-6:00.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon can be reached on (703) 308-4251. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9310 for regular communications and (703) 872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

*CAS*

Catherine Simone  
Examiner  
Art Unit 1772

April 7, 2003

*[Signature]*  
HAROLD PYON  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
1772

*4/14/03*